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TIRED MOTHERS

Tired Mothers

BY

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I

A LITTLE elbow leans upon your knee,
Your *tired* knee, that has so much to bear;
A child's dear eyes are looking lovingly
From underneath a thatch of shining hair.

Perhaps you do not heed the velvet touch
Of warm, moist fingers, folding yours so tight;
You do not prize this blessing overmuch,
You almost are too tired to pray, to-night!

II

BUT it *is* blessedness! A year ago
I did not see it as I do to-day.
We are so dull and thankless, and too slow
To catch the sunshine ere it slips away.

And now it seems surpassing strange to me,
That while I wore the badge of motherhood,
I did not kiss more oft and tenderly
The little child that brought me only good!

III

AND if some night when you sit down to rest,
You miss this elbow from your tired knee;
This restless, curling head from off your breast,
This lisping tongue that chatters constantly:

If from your own the dimpled hand had slipped,
And ne'er would nestle in your palm again;
If the white feet into their grave had tripped,
I could not blame you for your heart-ache then!

IV

I WONDER so that mothers ever fret
At little children clinging to their gown;
Or that the footprints when the days are wet,
Are ever black enough to make them frown!

If I could find a little muddy boot,
Or cap, or jacket, on my chamber floor;
If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,
And hear its music in my home once more;

V

IF I could mend a broken cart to-day,
To-morrow make a kite to reach the sky,
There is no woman in God's world could say,
She was more blissfully content than I!

But, ah! the dainty pillow next my own
Is never rumpled by a shining head;
My singing birdling from its nest is flown;
The little boy I used to kiss, *is dead!*

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